A Paper Boat Of Memories

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It was almost eleven and it was a cold, gloomy evening. The cloudy and starless sky was telling me that it would rain again. There weren't that many passersby on the sidewalk that was damp from the rain. I looked at him, his face illuminated by the orangey rays coming from the street lamps. He was asking me to stay for a little while and accompany him back to the office, but I was adamant that I had to go home. Finally, he agreed to take me to the bus station. As we walked, there was an awkward silence. I felt a heaviness inside me as I dragged my feet up the steps of the bus. I knew deep down that I wanted to stay and spend time with him like I did yesterday morning until evening. But I also knew that I had to go. Not because people at home would be waiting for me to arrive safely, but simply because I had to let him go. I knew that I could not own something that was not meant for me. Same as feeling something that I knew was wrong.

It was an hour's ride going home. The whole time I was on the bus, my eyes were fixed in a lost gaze outside the window, trying to get myself into the right frame of mind. Just when I got off the bus, the rain started falling while my eyes started to shed some tears. It was not the first time that I cried in the rain. But this time, the tears were not for grief but for a happy memory. Flashes of a scene that happened yesterday seemed as though they happened just minutes ago. It was during daybreak. The sky was dark and the air had a faint smell of mist and moistened earth. The rain was pouring hard, our shoes soaking wet, and we were walking under the same broken umbrella, looking for a place to shelter us from the rain, until we found ourselves stranded under a tree house in the playground in the park. From afar, we could see children happily bathing in the rain, stomping their bare feet deep into the mud. We talked about a lot of things that morning. We went around like nobody would think we were just friends or, rather, trying-to-be friends. We did things we were never really able to do when we were still together—meeting up early in the morning, going to the church together, bringing him along to my relative's house, spending time at the park, and having him fetch me from home. All the while, I was observing his actions, and although we had fun together laughing and teasing, I could not hide the truth that in his heart and mind it was never me to begin with. But I was happy even for those moments that I didn't care whether he still felt the same way or whether they would ever happen again. But at least now, we had something good to remember about each other.

Just as I was reliving yesterday's memory, it came to me that I need not be afraid to love even if it breaks my heart sometimes. Ironically, I also learned to somehow keep my guard up. For love is supposed to be priceless, long-lasting, and it does not depreciate. If it does not feel that way, then that might mean that I loved the wrong person. There are heartaches that we have to go through sometimes, but they're not meant to make us sad. They are but reasons to celebrate new and better beginnings. There are a lot of good men who will come my way, and there will be times when a man far better than the others will stop by and spend time with me. But when I come to the end of the road and realize that everything is over, I always remember that promise. So whenever someone comes along and breaks my heart into pieces, I know that there is always someone who will put it back together.

With that thought, I suddenly saw myself as a little girl softly pushing a paper boat by the rushing river and watching it as it sailed away from her.